BIBLE READING.

A young man writing in Our Social Chat this week on the great masterpieces of literature, very properly lays emphasis on the educational value of Bible study. It is true that, entirely aside from its importance as a code of morals and a guide to spiritual truth, the Bible is one of the world's greatest pieces of literature, and more than any other book a thorough knowledge of it is essential to a complete education and to effectiveness in reading, writing and speaking. In a recent number of the Sunday School Times the literary value of the Bible was strikingly suggested in the following paragraph:

"No, I haven't read 'The Loom of Life.' Have you? You read all the new books, did you say? Then you have read 'Genesis,' the only really new book there ever was. O, haven't you? Then perhaps you have read that very old book 'Job.' Haven't you? O, it is fine! It is suggestive of 'Faust,' but much better, I think. Perhaps you like books of travel. Have you ever read 'The Journeys of Abraham,' or 'The Trip of the Israelites,' or 'The Voyages of Paul?' No? Do you like biographies of successful men? Have you read 'The Life of Joseph' or 'The Life and Death of Moses, the Great Organizer,' or 'The Life of the Great Soldier Joshua?' You haven't? Maybe you like stories. Have you ever read that wonderful story of Gideon and the Midianites, or the story of the fall of Jericho? O, that's thrilling! The story of Ruth is very beautiful. Have you read it? So, also, is the story of Esther. Or, did you ever read that marvelous story of Daniel and the three kings? Have you ever read that sweetest story ever told, the story of the Babe at Bethlehem; or the saddest of all stories, the story of Calvary; or that most gloriously triumphant story the world has ever read, 'The First Easter Morn?'"

BOOK NOICES.

Progressive Farmer readers in the country are often at a loss to know where to purchase the standard and classics works of literature in durable and attractive form and yet at reasonable prices. We have before us now some of the publications of H. M. Caldwell & Co., Boston, Mass., and Howard Wilford Bell, 259 Fifth Avenue, New York City, which are in every respect satisfactory. Catalogues of these houses will be sent on application. D. C. Heath & Co., 120 Boylston Street., Botson, are also bringing out in them "Belles Letters Series," a number of standard English books, the text being exactly that of the original editions.

We have before us now the first volume we have seen of the "Gateway Series of English Texts," issued by the American Book Company. This volume is "Carlyle's Essay on Burns," edited by Dr. Edwin Mims, of Trinity College. In an introduction of fifty-three pages, Dr. Mims gives the student a brief, illuminating review of the life and influence of Carlyle, followed by critical comment on the Burns essay, and a short notice of the career of Burns himself. There are also copious notes on the text, which will be found helpful to any reader. It is gratifying to find a North Carolina scholar called upon to do work of this kind—especially when it is so well done as in this case.

There is no one in the South—possibly no one in America—who can clothe the dry bones of history with such life and comeliness as Thomas E. Watson, of Georgia. We have been intending for some time to review his latest work, "The Life and Times of Thomas Jefferson," published by the Macmillan Company (price, $2.50). Mr. Watson has done not only the South but the cause of history and truth a genuine service in presenting this portrait of Mr. Jefferson set off against a real Southern background. As the New York Outlook says: "The author has the advantage not only of complete sympathy with the man of whom he writes, but also of complete sympathy with the section from which he sprang. Many of the stories told of the part of the South in the struggles which prepared the way for the Revolutionary War will be new even to close students of the Revolutionary epoch—so exclusively has our early history been viewed from the standpoint of New England historians."

The latest of the James Sprunt Historical Monographs (No. 4), issued by the University of North Carolina, is entitled, "Letters and Documents Relating to the Early History of the Lower Cape Fear," with introdutcion and notes by Dr. Kemp P. Battle. It consists of extracts from the papers of the De Rosset family, members of which have been prominent residents of Wilmington since 1735; extracts from the Journal of the Board of Commissioners of the city prior to the Revolution, with notes by Captain Samuel A. Ashe, of Raleigh, of distinguished Cape Fear stock; letters of a loyalist, Mr. James Murray, 1735-1756; journal of Joshua Potts, in regard to the location of Smithfield, now Southport; letters of Captain Samuel Ashe, son of Governor Samuel Ashe, to Jo Seawell Jones, in regard to men and events of the Revoltuion; journal of General Joseph G. Swift (a United States officer, stationed on our coast in 1807 and later, who married Miss Walker, a North Carolina lady), orginally printed for private distribtuion, but very scarce; and lastly, extracts from an oration by Colonel James G. Burr, who was an ardent antiquarian.

Nathaniel Macon.

In concluding his recently published biography of Nathaniel Macon, Dr. Wm. E. Dodd gives this able and dispassionate estimate of his hero:

"Macon's place in history must be determined by his relations to the South, a distinct section of the nation. He believed with Jefferson, and more especially with Willie Jones, that the State was the centre of power in this country, and that, next to the State, the South had the first demands on his service; he was among the first to suggest the annexation of Florida; and, with John Randolph, he first laid down the dictum, which the South accepted and clung to until 1865, that it should admit no compromise on the slave question. In fact, Macon must be regarded as the counterpart of Randolph in founding the creed of the Secessionists; he was a stronger and more influential man than his 'brilliant but flighty friend of Roanoke.'

"The question has often been asked: 'Was he a statesman?' He was a Southern statesman in the sectional sense; and the giving of his name to counties and towns all over the South shows that he was so recognized. That is all that this very imperfect yet somewhat painstaking study of his life justifies the author in claiming for him."

Pithy Sayings of John Westley.

I have no time to be in a hurry.

God begins His work in children.

The best of all is, God is with us.

I look upon the world as my parish.

I dare no more fret than curse or swear.

God buries His workmen, but continues His work.

I save all I can and give all I can; that is, all I have.

Loyalty (to rulers) is with me an essential branch of religion.

It is a happy thing if we can learn obedience by the things which we suffer.

It is plain God sees it best for you frequently to walk in a thorny path.

When I devoted to God my ease, my time, my fortune, my life, I did not except my reputation.

Be punctual. Whenever I am to go to a place the first thing I do is to get ready; then, what time remains is my own.

The Economics of the Plantation.

Since the end of the Civil War there has been in the South a tendency toward the multiplication of small holdings of land, which has been thought to promise the disappearance of all the plantations. But a more careful study of the general problem will show that the tendencies in the unsettled periods of reconstrutcion and later were probably of temporary character, and that something like the old plantation will be established as the predominant type of agricultural organization in the South for the future.

The plantation was evolved in early colonial Virginia as the most efficient system for growing tobacco. That was before African slaves were imported in any appreciable numbers. The negroes were soon found to fit in admirably with the plantation arrangements. A similar system was established in the Carolina districts producing rice and indigo, and in the sugar-cane fields of Louisiana. Finally the invention of the cotton-gin and the extension of cotton culture into the uplands carried the plantation into the whole of the staple-producing South. Wherever the land was adapted to tobacco, rice, indigo, sugar, or cotton, the plantation won the victory over the small farm. It was the survival of the fittest. The involuntary servitude of the laborers was merely an incident. There is no essential reason why the freedom of the slaves should destroy the plantations.

The conditions of the problem in Southern agriculture were and remain as follows:

1. Abundance of land. 2. Money crops, with uncertain money returns. 3. Ignorant and unenterprising labor. 4. A large number of efficient managers of agricultural labor, who are usually also the owners of the soil and of such capital as exists. The problem is how to organize this labor under the existing conditions to secure the best returns. In former times the plantation system was developed as the most efficient for the purpose, and to-day it is not at all clear that the usefulness of that system has departed.

The plantation system was the apolication of manufacturing or capitalistic methods to agricultural production. The planter was a captain of industry. He owned the land, he planned the work of the year, and he saw to it that the work was done. His problem was to lay out the fields for the best return, to keep his laborers profitably at work in all seasons, to guard against the overworking of his laborers or his mules, and to watch receipts and expenditures with an eye for economy. If the planter failed in any of these requirements, he lost his wages of superintendence. If he allowed expenditures to exceed receipts, he lost first his profits, then his rent, and finally his capital. By overworking his land, his mules, or his laborers, to their injury, he might secure a greater return for one year, but was sure to be the loser in the long run.

In a normal period the small farm could not compete with a well-managed plantation in the produtcion of the staples. A man who is able to manage a small farm to advantage is usually able also to superintend the labor of others in his line of work. Wages of efficient superintendence are always much higher than the wages of mere labor. The tendency, then, in the staple regions where additional labor was to be had, was for the successful farmer to establish himself as a planter. When an independent artisan becomes a foreman in a factory, or advances further to the ownership and superintendence of a mill, he does no wrong to the other artisans or to the factory operatives. By his efficient work on the larger scale he serves the whole world better than before. The advance of a ploughman into efficient plantation management and ownership causes a net increase in production, with a lowering of cost, and usually also means a betterment for the laborers under him.—Ulrich B. Phillips, in South Atlantic Quarterly.